



Editorial Style Guide

Murray State University

Murray State University follows the grammar and punctuation

A In general, avoid using acronyms if possible. Only use acronyms if they will be used again throughout the document. If an acronym is necessary, use the full name on first reference followed by the acronym in parentheses.

EXAMPLE:

She was awarded a grant by the National Science Foundation (NSF).

A Do not use “adviser.”

A The ampersand (&) is not a substitute for “and.” Use only when included as part of an official name, such as the Town & Gown Partnership.

Capitalize sparingly. In general, avoid unnecessary capitalization and resist the urge to use capitalization to signify importance. See “colleges and departments,” “degrees” and “titles” in this guide.

Capitalize the official names of Murray State colleges, schools, departments and offices. Lowercase program names, majors, areas, minors and informal names (e.g., biology department) except in the case of proper nouns, such as English, Spanish, Chinese, etc. Use the formal department name whenever possible (e.g. Department of Journalism and Mass Communications).

EXAMPLES:

Arthur J. Bauernfeind College of Business

Department of History

nonprofit leadership studies

chemistry department

an accounting major with an English minor

Do not use the Oxford (a.k.a. serial) comma, which is the comma that comes before conjunctions like “and” and “or” in a series of three or more items.

EXAMPLE:

The students purchased notebooks, pens and folders before the semester started.

Capitalize the formal name of the degree if referencing.

EXAMPLE:

“Bachelor of Arts” or “Master of Science.” This style should be used sparingly.

When listing degrees by their initials, do not use periods. This style should be used sparingly.

EXAMPLE:

BS, MS, MFA and PhD

Use email rather than e-mail in all instances, in keeping with Associated Press style.

Faculty and staff is an acceptable singular construction when referring to both groups of university employees.

The term “freshman” should be used to refer to an individual first-year student or a collective freshman class, while “freshmen” refers to one or more first-year students.

EXAMPLES:

Abdul is a freshman at Murray State University.

The three freshmen were chosen to participate in this year’s conference.

Murray State University’s freshman class saw significant growth this fall.

GPA is acceptable to use on first reference when referring to a grade point average.

Use first and last names on first references. If an individual holds a doctorate, include “Dr.” before their first and last name on first references. In all subsequent references, use only the individual’s last name. When writing a story with multiple people that share the last name, referring to the individual by their first name is acceptable.

EXAMPLE:

The class was taught by Dr. Kelly Jones. The students enjoyed the conversational approach Jones used at her classroom discussions.



Use only a single space after a period at the end of a sentence.



The names of states should always be spelled out when used in a body of text. Offset the state with commas if paired with a city.

EXAMPLES:

He grew up in Mayfield, Kentucky, before deciding to attend Murray State.

Several incoming students from Ohio attended the Summer O session.



Use 10-digit numbers with hyphens as separators: 270-809-XXXX. Do not use parentheses around the area code.



Do not use “MSU.” Always spell out the University’s full name in the first instance and use “Murray State” and “the University” in subsequent references. Capitalize the “U” when referring to Murray State as “the University.”

Use the shortest version of a URL. Delete the “http://” and “www.” portions of the address. Include a hyperlink for digital content. Make certain the link is functional and takes users to the correct webpage.

EXAMPLE:

murraystate.edu/programs

If you have additional questions, please contact the Public Relations within the Office of Branding, Marketing and Communication.

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